Serm: 23

A

SERMON

Preached *July* 2, at the

FUNERAL

OF

Mr John Wells

Late Paſtor of *Olave-Jury*, *London*.

By *Thomas Watſon*, late Miniſter of the Goſpel in *Stephens Walbrook*, *London*.

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TO THE READER.

Good Reader,

AT the Request of ſome friends I have been induced to publiſh this Sermon: it is ſwelled ſomething bigger in the Preſs; But the matter I had prepared before, only there wanted Time to ſerve it in. If thou reapeſt any benefit by this enſuing Diſcourſe, I ſhall not repent that it was made publick.

Thine to ſerve thee

July 7. 1676.

THO. WATSON.

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THO. WATSON.

TIMES
SHORTNESS.

I COR. VII. 29.

But this I ſay, Brethren, the time is ſhort.

THe bleſſed Apoſtle in theſe words ſhews us what our ſtation in the world, and all our Secular enjoyments are; they are minute and tranſient, *But this I ſay, Brethren, the time is ſhort.*

The Text conſiſts of two parts:

1. A Kind Compellation ἀδελφοὶ, *Brethren.*

2. A Seaſonable Admonition, ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος, *The time is ſhort.*

1. A Kind Compellation, *Brethren.* The Saints of God are Brethren. They

 are

* *Auguſt.* are *eodem ſanguine conglutinati* *, cemented together with the blood of Chriſt.

Then *let there be no ſtrife among them, ſeeing they are brethren*, Gen. 13. 8. Believers are regenerated by the ſame *Spirit*, they ſuck the ſame Breaſts, the Promiſes; they wear the ſame Garment, *Chriſts Righteouſneſs*; they ſit at the ſame Board, the *Table of the Lord*; they partake of the ſame Glory, *the inheritance in light*, Col. 1. 12, and ſhall they not love! There ought to be no contending among Gods people, but who ſhould love moſt *. * 1 Pet. 3. 8.

Satan leaps at diſcord, he warms himſelf at the fire of mens Paſſions. If he cannot divide the Spiritual members from their Head, he will endeavour to make them *ſmite one againſt another*. If he cannot keep the Saints from Heaven, he will endeavour to make them *fall out by the way*. It was ill for *Abrahams* Herd-men and *Lots* to fall out when the *Canaanite* was in the Land, *Gen.* 13. 7. 'Tis an ill time for Mariners to be fighting when the enemy is boring an hole in the bottom of the Ship. Take heed the Popiſh Enemy doth not enter

enter at your breaches. Let Chriſtians remember they are *Brethren.* Unity among Brethren, reſembles the harmony among Angels. *Pſal.* 133. 1, 2, *Behold how good and pleaſant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity; it is like the precious ointment upon the head, as the dew of Hermon.* 'Tis compared to *ointment*, becauſe it is ſweet; and to the *dew of Hermon*, becauſe it makes every thing fruitful. The Primitive Chriſtians were *of one heart*, Act. 4. 32. Let us pray, That that Golden Motto may be written upon *England*, *Cor unum, via una*, *one Heart*, and *one way*; Jer. 32. 39. What a bleſſed place will Heaven be, where our light ſhall be clear, our love ſhall be perfect, our joy ſhall be full!

2. A Seaſonable Admonition, *The time is ſhort.* This word [*Time*] I ſhall take more *ſtrictly* for the term and period of mans life, *The time is ſhort.* The divers inſtances of Mortality may ſerve as ſo many Commentaries upon the Text. The *Greek* word for *ſhort* *alludes to Mariners, who roul up their Sails and bring them into a narrow compaſs when the Ship

* συνεσταλμένος.

draws near the Harbour. So though the ſails of mans life were ſpread larger in the times of the Patriarchs, yet now God is folding up theſe ſails in a narrower compaſs, *Tempus contractum eſt*, the *Time is ſhort*: the Scripture frequently aſſerts the brevity and tranſitorineſs of mans life, *Pſal.* 89. 97, *Remember how ſhort my time is* *. Pſal. 39. 5, *Behold, thou haſt made my days as an hand-breadth*; which is the leaſt of the Geometrical meaſures. *Job* uſeth three elegant Metaphors to ſet forth the ſhortneſs of mans life, *Job* 9.25, *My days are ſwifter than a Poſt, they are paſſed away as the ſwift ſhips, as the eagle that haſteth to her prey.* If we look to the land, there mans life is like a ſwift Poſt; if we look to the Sea, there it is like a ſwift Ship; if we look to the air, there it is like a flying eagle.

* *Quantillum ſit tempus meum.* Gejer.

Life is compared to a cloud, *Job* 7. 9, a cloud is a vapour drawn up by the Sun into the middle-region of the air; when this cloud comes to its full proportion, it is ſoon diſperſed and blown away with the wind. Life gathers as a cloud, bigger and big-

bigger, but on a ſudden it is diſſipated by death. Our life is but as a point to the Globe *, nay it is leſs, *Pſal.* 39.5, *My age is as nothing * before thee.* There is but a ſpan between the Cradle and the Grave. * אין *Solomon* ſaith, *There is a time to be born, and a time to die*, Eccleſ. 3. 3, but mentions no time of living, as if that were ſo ſhort, it were not worth ſpeaking of *.

* *Puſtum eſt quod vivimus & puncto minus.* Sen.

* *Vita adeò parum a morte diſtat ut ipſa mors ſit.* Muſc.

Queſt. *In what ſenſe is the time of life ſhort?*

Anſw. 1. It is ſhort in reſpect of the *uncertainty*, it may inſtantly expire. A man that holds a Farm at the will of his Landlord, if he be asked how long time he hath in the Farm, he will ſay, no time at all, becauſe he is ſure of none, he may be turned out the next hour. So our time is ſhort becauſe uncertain. *Hezekiah*, it is true, had a leaſe of fifteen years ſealed, *Iſa.* 38.5, but we have no ſuch leaſe ſealed us, death may be within a days march of us.

Quis ſcit an adjiciant hodiernæ craſtina vitæ tempora, dii ſuperi *.

* Horat.

There are ſo many caſualities, that it is a wonder

wonder if the ſlender thread of our Life be not cut off by untimely Death. Have you not ſeen a Virgin on the ſame day dreſſed in her Bride-apparel, and her Winding-ſheet.

2. Time is ſhort in reſpect of the *improvement*. If we reckon that for Time which is *well ſpent*, then Time is brought into a narrow compaſs indeed: a great part of our Time lies Fallow: take from our life all the time of Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, beſides idle impertinencies, and then how ſhort is our Time! How little is the time wherein we can truly ſay, *Hoc Vixi*, *This time I have lived!* O how little is the time which is ſpent with God! Time miſimployed, is not Time *lived*, but Time *loſt* *.

* *Diu fuit in mundo non vixit.* Sen.

3. Time is ſhort compared with Eternity. There is no Proſpective-glaſs to ſee to the end of Eternity. Eternity is a Day that hath no Sun-ſetting *. It is a Circle without beginning or end. Eternity is a ſum that can never be numbred, a Line that can never be meaſured: reckon as many millions of years as there have been minutes

* *una dies continua occaſum non habens.* Gerh.

nutes ſince the Creation, and they ſtand for Ciphers in Eternity. The moſt elevated ſtrains of Rhetorique cannot reach Eternity *: It is a Sea without Bottom and Banks. Time may be compared to a ſpot of Earth lying at the mouth of the great Ocean; Time is a *Spot* on this ſide Eternity; and what a little of that Spot is Mans life! Thus you ſee in what ſenſe Time is ſhort.

* *Cogita centum millia annorum, cogita decies Centena millia annorum, Cogita mille milliones annorum, immò ſeculorum nondum inchoaſti æternum.* Corn. à Lap.

It will not be long before *the Silver cord be looſed, and the Golden bowl broken*, Eccleſ. 12. 6. By the *Silver Cord* I underſtand the Pith or Marrow of the Back, which for its whiteneſs is called Silver: this Silver Cord will ſoon be looſed. By the *Golden Bowl* is meant the Meninx, or Skin, wherein the Brains are encloſed as in a Bowl; this Golden Bowl will ſoon be broken. Time goes on apace *. The Poets painted Time with *Wings*, becauſe it flies ſo faſt. In *Joſhua*'s dayes, when the Sun and Moon ſtood ſtill, Time went on. In *Hezekiah*'s Reign when the Sun went *Ten degrees backward*, Time went forward. Our whole life is

* *Animantis cujuſque vita in fuga eſt.*

no-

nothing elſe but a paſſage to Death, where there is no ſtaying by the way, or ſlacking our pace.

Uſe 1. See what a poor inconſiderable thing Life is. *The time is ſhort*, and upon this ſmall *Wire* of time hangs the Weight of Eternity. Life is but a ſhort Scene Acted here. It is but ἀτμὶς a *Vapour* or puff of Wind, *Jam.* 1. 4 *. Life is made up of a few flying Minutes. Oh then how imprudent are they, who to ſave their Lives will damn their Souls! He were unwiſe, who to preſerve a ſhort Leaſe would loſe his Freehold: How many ſuch are there who to preſerve this ſhort Life will take indirect courſes, defraud and oppreſs, and to build up an Eſtate will pull down their Souls; many to ſave their Skins will deflour their Conſcience: *Spira* to preſerve his Life abjured the Faith.

* *ut Vir eruſcit Vita decreſcit*, Senec.

The *Iriſh* make great reckoning of their Skimeter (a Warlike Weapon) and will endure a blow on the Arm to keep their Skimeter from being hurt. To this Skimeter I may compare the Soul: better it is to endure a blow on our Body, or

or Eſtate, than ſuffer our precious Soul to be endamaged. The Soul is the *Man* of the *Man*: The Soul of *Plato*, is *Plato*: The Soul is the Princely part, Crowned with Reaſon; it is *Dei inſignita imagine* *; it carries in it ſome faint *Idæa* or Reſemblance of the *Trinity*. The Soul is a rich Diamond ſet in Clay: what folly is it for ſaving the Clay, to loſe the Diamond! Like *Tiberius* the Emperour, who for a draught of Water loſt a Kingdom.

* Bern.

Uſe 2. Is Time ſo curtail'd and ſhortned? Let us often contemplate the ſhortneſs of Life*. Feathers ſwim upon the Water, but Gold ſinks into it. Light Feathery-ſpirits float in vanity; but ſerious Chriſtians ſink deep into the thoughts of their ſudden change; *Deut.* 32. 29, *O that they were wiſe, that they would conſider their latter end.* Forgetfulneſs of the latter end, makes Life ſinful, and Death formidable. People naturally ſhrink back from the thoughts of Death: *Amos* 6. 3, *They put far away from them the evil day.* When they are young, they hope they ſhall

Uſe 2. Exhort. Br. 1.

* *Vivt memor Lethi.* Perſ.

spin out Life to the *Blossoming of the Almond Tree*; and when old age comes, they hope to *renew their strength as the Eagle* *: though their Bodies are subject to corruption, and they feel the symptoms of mortality in them, *Deafness of Hearing*, here is Death creeping in at the Ear; *Dimness of Sight*, here is Death creeping in at the Eye: yet so frantique are they, as to perswade themselves of long life. Bodily diseases are but Deaths Harbingers, which go before to bespeak a Lodging for Death. Why then do men dream of an Earthly Eternity? *Psal.* 49. 11, *Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever.* Where is the Man that contemplates *Times Shortness*, or makes another's Death a Looking-glass in which he may see his own dying *Face*.

* *Nemo putat se citò moriturum.* Aug.

Some may say, this Discourse of the *Shortness of Time* is fit for such as are *Consumptive*, whom the Physicians have given over; but for their parts they are well in health, and may live these many years *.

* Νόος εἶς μὴ θαρσήσῃς τῇ νεότητι. Chrys.

But

But though your Blood be freſh in your Veins, and your Bones are full of Marrow, you know not how ſhort your time may be: He was not ſick, nor in fear of ſickneſs, who ſaid, *Soul take thy eaſe*, but that night Death ſealed him a Leaſe of Ejectment, *Luke* 12. 20. Freſhneſs of Complexion is ſometimes a lightning before Death. The metal of which Glaſs is made, when it begins to ſhine, is neareſt melting. Perſons likely enough to live, have been ſuddenly taken away, by Squinifies, Convulſions, Appoplexies. How ſoon may Death ſound its Allarm! 'Tis reported of *Zeleuchus*, that the firſt piece of Houſehold-ſtuff he brought into *Babylon*, was a Tomb-ſtone. O Meditate of the tranſiency and brittleneſs of Life: think often of your Tombe-ſtone.

Queſt. What advantage will accrew to us by often thinking of our ſhort ſtay here?

Anſw. 1. The ſhortneſs of Time meditated on, would cool the heat of our affections to the World. Theſe viſible ob-

jects pleaſe the fancy, but they do not ſo much *delight* us, as *delude* us: they are *brevi dilapſura*, ſuddenly gone from us. Worldly things are like a fair Picture drawn on the Ice, which the Sun quickly melts*. *The time is ſhort*, why ſhould we love that *over-much*, which we cannot keep *over-long?* 1 *Cor.* 7. 31, *The faſhion* *, or Pageant, *of the World paſſeth away.* Time paſſeth away as a Ship in full ſail: this thought-on ſeriouſly, would mortify Covetouſneſs. *Paul* looked upon himſelf as ready to looſen Anchor and be gone, 2 *Pet.* 1. 14, *Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my Tabernacle:* And how did his love to the World dye? *Gal.* 6. 14, *The World is Crucified to me, and I unto the World.* Who would covet that much, which hath neither *Contentment* nor *Continuance?* Among the *Græcians*, the City of *Sparta* had a King of it but for a year, and then he was to lay down his Crown, which made every one ſtrive not to be King. Why ſhould we ſo toil about the World, as if we were to live here ever? What needs a long proviſion for

* *Theodoret.*

* σχῆμα.

a

a ſhort way *? If we have but enough to bear our charges to Heaven, it ſufficeth. Suppoſe a mans Leaſe were ready to expire, and he ſhould fall a building and planting, would not he be judged indiſcreet? When our time is ſo very ſhort, now to follow the World immoderately, as if we would fetch happineſs out of the Earth, which God hath curſed, is a degree of frenzy: we ſhall have no need of the Earth ſhortly, but to be buried in it.

* *Parum vix quid multum viati.i?*

2. The meditation of the ſhortneſs of Time, would be a means to humble us. St. *Auguſtin* calls Humility the Mother of the Graces. Balm ſinks to the bottom of the Water: a good Chriſtian ſinks low in Humility: and what can ſooner pull down the Flags and Banners of Pride, than to conſider we are ſhortly dropping into the Duſt *. The Prieſt was to caſt the Feathers of the Fowls, *by the place of the aſhes, Levit.* 1. 16. All your Feathers of Honour muſt ſhortly lye in the aſhes. Shall not he which is cloathed with Mortality, be cloathed with Humility? The thoughts

* *Agnoſcat homo ſe eſſe mortalem & franget elationem.* Aug.

thoughts of the Grave would bury our pride. When the Lord had ſaid to the Judges, *Pſal.* 82. 6, *I ſaid ye are gods*; leſt they ſhould grow proud, he adds a corrective, *but ye ſhall die like men.* Ye are *dying-gods.*

3. The meditation of the ſhortneſs of time, would haſten our Repentance. Repentance is as neceſſary as Heaven; as radical moiſture and natural heat preſerve the life, ſo repenting-tears, and an heart burning with love, preſerve the ſoul. It is natural to delay Repentance *. We ſay as *Hag.* 1. 2, *The time is not yet come.* But the Text ſaith, *the time is ſhort*; our life is a taper, ſoon blown out. The thoughts of Times volubility and ſwiftneſs, would keep us from proroguing our repentance. 'Tis no time for us to make a long work, when God is making a ſhort work *. It is obſerved of the Birds of *Norway*, that they fly faſter than the birds of other Countrys. By the inſtinct of nature knowing the days in that Climate to be very ſhort, they therefore make the more haſt to their neſts. The conſideration of our ſhort abode here, will make

* εἰς ἄυριον τὰ σπουδαῖα. Plutarch.

* μὴ εἰς τὴν ἄυριον ἀναβαλλώμεθα, ὁ γὰρ οἰδαμὲν τί τέξεται ἡ ἐπιοῦσα. Chryſ. Hom. 22. de Simult.

make us avoid delays, and fly faſter to Heaven upon the wing of repentance.

4. The meditation of the ſhortneſs of time, would antidote us againſt the temptations of Satan *. Temptation is Satans eldeſt daughter, that woes for him. Satan doth more miſchief by his *wiles*, than his *darts*. He knows how to ſuit his temptations, as the Husbandman knows what ſeed is proper for ſuch a ſoil. Satan tempted *Achan* with a wedg of Gold; *David* with Beauty. It is hard to keep up the banks of Grace againſt the ſea of Temptation. I know no better remedy againſt Satans immodeſt ſolicitations, than this Text, *The time is ſhort*: What Satan, doſt thou tempt me to vanity, when I am going to give up my accounts? ſhall I now be ſinning, when to morrow I may be dying? How ſhall I look my Judg in the face? Chriſtian, when Satan ſets ſinful pleaſure before thee, ſhew him a *deaths-head*, this will make temptations vaniſh.

* ἐπάλληλοι πειρασμοί.

5. The conſideration of the ſhortneſs of our ſtay in the world, would be an help to *Temperance*; it would make us ſober

ſober and moderate in the uſe of worldly comforts. By exceſs we turn things lawful into ſin*; the Bee may ſuck a little honey from the leaf, but put it into a barrel of honey, and it is drowned. We may with *Jonathan*, dip the *end of the rod in honey*, but not thruſt it in too far*. *Noah* took too much of the Grape, *Gen.* 9. 21. The fleſh, when pampered, rebels: The beſt preſervative againſt intemperance is this, *Tempus eſt contractum*, The *time is ſhort*. When we are feaſting, death may quickly take away the Cloth. *Plutarch* reports, that the *Egyptians* uſed at their great Banquets to bring in the Image of a dead man, and ſay to their Gueſts, *Look upon this, and proceed in your Banket.* An excellent Antidote againſt a Surfeit. *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* erected a Sepulchre in his Garden, to ſpice his flowry delights with the thoughts of death.

* *In licitis primus omnes.*

* 1 Sam. 14. 27.

* Plut.

6. The meditation of the ſhortneſs of time, would much mitigate our grief for the loſs of dear Relations. It is obſervable, when the Apoſtle had ſaid, *The time is ſhort*, he preſently adds, *Let them that weep*

weep be as if they wept not. No doubt the loſs of Relations is grievous to the fleſhy part. It is like pulling a limb from the body. When God ſtrikes us in our *right eye*, we weep. 'Tis lawful to give vent to our grief: *Joſeph* wept over his dead Father. But though Religion doth not *baniſh* grief, it *bounds* it. We muſt weep *quaſi non*, *as if we wept not*. *Rachels* ſin was, that ſhe *refuſed to be comforted*, Mat. 2. 18. *Origen* it is thought died of grief; and if any thing can ſtop the iſſue of ſorrow, at leaſt aſſwage it, it is this, *The time is ſhort.* We ſhall ſhortly have our loſſes made up, and enjoy our godly Relations again in Heaven.

7. The Meditation of the ſhortneſs of time, would make us highly value Grace. Time is *ſhort*, but Grace is *for ever*. 1 Joh. 2. 27, *The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you.* Grace is a bloſſome of Eternity *; it is *ſemen manens*, an *immortal ſeed*, 1 Joh. 3. 9. Grace is *Embryo Gloriæ*; Grace is not blaſted by death, but tranſplanted into a better ſoil. Grace is not a leaſe which ſoon expires, but an

* Joh. 4. 19.

inheritance intailed for ever. He who hath true Grace, can no more loſe it, than the Angels can who are fixed in their Heavenly Orb. *Rev.* 10.6, *The Angel ſware by him that liveth for ever, that there ſhould be time no longer.* But Grace ſhall ſurvive time, and run parallel with Eternity.

2. *Branch.* If Time be ſo ſhort, and winged, take heed of miſpending this ſhort time; to miſpend time is the worſt prodigality.

1. Take heed of ſpending time *unprofitably*; *Domitian* waſted much of his time in catching Flies *. Many live to *cumber the ground. Telluris inutile pondus.* Judg. 10.4, *Jair had thirty Sons that rode on thirty aſs-colts, and they had thirty cities*, and they died. So it may be ſaid, ſuch an one was born in the reign of ſuch a King, and he poſſeſſed ſuch an Eſtate, and he died; his life was ſcarce worth a prayer, or his death worth a tear. An idle perſon ſtands in the world but for a cypher, and God writes down no cyphers in the book of life; many are like the *wood* of the Vine, uſeleſs. *Ezek.* 15. 3, *Will men*

* *Turpe eſt difficiles habere nugas.* Mart.

men take a pin of it to hang any veſſel thereon? Too many reſemble the Lillies, which *toil not, neither do they ſpin.* They ſpend their time as the Emperour *Caligula*, he was at a great expence to provide a Navy, and when it was provided he ſent his Mariners to Sea to gather cockle-ſhells, and ſo they ſailed home again. God hath furniſh'd men with precious time wherein they may *work out Salvation*, and they imploy it vainly, *aut aliud agendo aut nihil* *; they ravel it out in impertinencies. What reward can be expected when there is no work done? who is crowned that never fights? *Mat.* 25. 30, *Caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant into utter darkneſs.*

* Sen:

2. Take heed of ſpending time *viciouſly*; Divers ſpend their ſhort time in drinking, gaming, whoring: *Eſau* while he was hunting loſt the bleſſing; many while they hunt after ſinful pleaſures, loſe Heaven: Sin is boiled to a great heigth in this Age; men ſtudy *new Oaths*, and count it a ſhame not to be impudent; they are ſteep'd and parboil'd in wickedneſs *; they live in the world to infect others, as the

* μὴ χρὴ λέγειν, ἀλλὰ καλὰ πάσχειν. Claud.

Baſilisk with its breath poiſons the herbs. What a dreadful account will they have to give, who have nothing to ſhew God but their Treaſons?

Branch 3. If the time of life be ſo ſhort, let us improve it. *Epheſ.* 5. 16, *Redeeming the time.* If a man had but a ſhort time in a Farm, he would make the beſt improvement of it; and get as good a Crop as he could out of it, before he left it. The thoughts of our ſhort ſtay here, ſhould make us improve this little Inch of time.

And that we may the better do this, Remember, we muſt be accountable to God for *Time*. God will ſay, What have you done with your Time? If a Lord intruſt his Steward with ſuch money and goods, he expects that he ſhould give him an account what he hath done with them, and how he hath employ'd them. Every one of us are Stewards, and God will call us to a reckoning, and ſay, What have you done with the *Talent* of *Time* I intruſted you with?

Queſt. *How ſhould we improve this ſhort time?* *Anſw.*

Anſw. 1. In *General*, mind Salvation-work, *Philip.* 2 12. He who layes up Gold and Silver, is wiſe for his Children; but he who gets Salvation, is wiſe for himſelf *.

* Prov. 9. 12.

2. In *ſpecial*, improve this ſhort time,

1. By a ſerious examination: Chriſtians, examine how the caſe ſtands between God and your Souls, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5, *Prove your ſelves.* The *Greek* word is Δοκιμάζετε, try your ſelves, as the Goldſmith doth his Gold by a *Touchſtone.* Time is *ſhort*, and what if God ſhould ſay this night, *Give an account of your Stewardſhip.*

1. Account with your ſelves about your *Debts*? are your debts paid, your ſins pardoned?

2. Account with your ſelves about making your *Will*: *Time is ſhort*, you may dye before night; have you made your Will? I mean in a Spiritual ſenſe, have you given up your Will to God, and by ſolemn vow ſet Seal to the Will? They are fitteſt to reſign their *Souls* to God, who have reſigned their *Wills* to him.

2. Call

3. Call your ſelves to account about your *Evidences*. Are your Evidences for Heaven ready? Your *Deſires* are your Evidences. Do you deſire Chriſt *for himſelf*; As Beauty is loved for it ſelf? And can nothing quench your thirſt but Chriſts Blood? and, Is your deſire quickned into endeavour *? This is a bleſſed ſign.

* Iſa. 26. 9.

For want of this ſelf-examination, many who are well known to others, are unknown to themſelves: they know not whither they ſhall go when they dye, or to what Coaſt they ſhall Sail, to Hell, or to Heaven*.

* *Animula, vagula, blandula, quæ nunc abibis in loca?* Hadr.

2. Improve this ſhort time by laying hold of all the ſeaſons and opportunities for your Souls. The Mariner takes the fit ſeaſon, he ſets to Sea while the wind blows. *Time is ſhort*, and Opportunity (which is the Cream of Time) is ſhorter. Let not the ſeaſons of mercy ſlip.

1. While Gods Spirit ſtrives with you, cheriſh its ſweet whiſpers and motions: as when the Dove came flying to the windows of the Ark, *Noah* reached out his

his hand, and pulled it into the Ark: So when Gods Spirit (this bleſſed Dove) comes to you, entertain and welcom it into the Ark of your Souls*. If you repulſe the Spirit, he may refuſe to *ſtrive* any more. Goſpel-ſeaſons though they are ſweet, they are ſwift. * Gen. 6. 8.

2. While God's Miniſters are with you, make uſe of them, *Zechar.* 1. 5, *The Prophets, do they live for ever?* Their Time (by reaſon of their labours) is ſcarce ſo long as others. We read of *Lamps within the Pitchers*, Judg. 7. 16. Miniſters are *Lamps*; but theſe Lamps are in *Earthen Pitchers*, which ſoon break. Miniſters, though they carry the Word of Life in their Mouths, yet they carry Death in their Faces. Improve their labours while you have them: they thirſt for your happineſs, and as ſo many Bells would Chime-in your Souls to Chriſt.

3. Improve this ſhort time by keeping up a cloſe Communion with God, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. *Our κοινωνία*, or *Communion is with the Father, &c.* This ſweet Communion with God is kept up, 1. By holy me-

meditation, *Gen.* 24. 63, *Iſaac went out to meditate in the Field at even-tide.* Meditation concocts Divine-truths in the mind. It brings God and the Soul together*. It is the bellows of the affections: It gives a ſight and a taſt of inviſible Glory, *Pſal.* 140. 39, *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.*

* *Nil in hac vita dulcius ſentitur, nil ita mentem ab amore mundi ſiparat, nil ſic animam contra tentationes roborat, nil hominem ita ad omne bonum opus excitat, quam gratia Contemplationis.* Bern.

2. Communion with God is kept up by Prayer: Praying-dayes are Aſcenſion-dayes. *Caligula* placed his Effigies in the Capitol, whiſpering in *Jupiter's* Ears. Prayer whiſpers in Gods Ears: It is a ſecret parley and converſe with God *. On this Mount of Prayer the Soul hath many ſweet transfigurations.

* Ὁμιλία Πρὸς τὸν θεὸν Clem. Alex.

4. Improve this ſhort time by doing all the ſervice you can for God *: Wiſdom may be learned of an Enemy; Satan is the more fierce, *becauſe he knoweth his time is but ſhort*, Rev. 12. 12: we ſhould act more vigorouſly for God, ſeeing our time is but ſhort. Our lives ſhould be as jewels, though *little* in *quantity*, yet great in *value*. St. *Paul* knew his ſtay in the world was ſhort, 2 *Pet* 1, 14, there-

* *Deo ſervire eſt regnare.*

therefore how zealous and active was he for God while he lived, 1 *Cor*, 5. 10. *I laboured* περισσοτερον, *more abundantly than they all.* Paul's Obedience did not move ſlow, as the Sun on the Dial, but ſwift, as the Sun in the Firmament. Is Time ſhort? Let us be God-exalters, let us bring Glory to God in doing good to others: as Aromatick-trees ſweat out their precious Oyles; ſo ſhould we lay out our ſtrength for the good of others.

1. Let us do good to their *Souls*: convince the ignorant, ſtrengthen the weak, reduce the wandring: A good Chriſtian is both a *Diamond* and a *Load-ſtone*. A Diamond ſparkling in ſanctity, and a Loadſtone for his attractive virtue in drawing others to Chriſt.

2. Let us do good to their Bodies: Many at this day ſay to their ſorrows, *Ye are our Companions*. Let our Fingers drop with the Myrrhe of liberality, *Heb.* 13. 16, *To do good, and communicate, forget not.* Let us feed the hungry, cloath the naked; be *Temporal Saviours* to others *.

* *Incipit erogare ſi non vis errare.* Aug. de Verb. Dom.

Could we thus improve our time, our lives, though *short*, would be *sweet*: this would be the way to cast abroad a fragrant redolent smell in Gods Church; like the Orange-trees which perfume the air where they grow.

Could we thus improve our time, we might have our Consciences drawing up a Certificate for us, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12: and then no matter though the World censure, if Conscience acquit: no matter how cross the wheels go, if the Clock strikes right.

Could we thus improve our time, we might have an ἐκβασιν, an easy and joyful passage out of the world. This was *Hezekiah*'s comfort when he thought he was lying on his death-bed, 2 *King.* 20. 3, *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have done that which is good in thy sight.* To improve Time aright, answers Gods cost, credits Religion, saves the Soul.

Use 3. Terror to every wicked person, who exhausts his strength in sin: his time here is *short*, and then begins his Hell.

He

He ſpends his life in a frolick; he takes the *Timbrel and Harp, and rejoyceth at the ſound of the Organ*, Job 21. 12. But the time is ſhortly coming, when all his mirth ſhall ceaſe, *Rev.* 18 22, *The voice of the Harpers, and Muſicians, and Trumpeters ſhall be heard no more at all in thee.* The Grave buries all a ſinners joy. When a wicked man dies, the Devil gets a windfal. Satan (in *Samuel's* ſhape) ſaid to *Saul*, 2 *Sam.* 28. 19, *Thou ſhalt be with me to morrow.* The Sinner is to day with his Luſts, and may be to morrow with the Devil. Who would envy the wicked, their honour, or pleaſure? they muſt pay dear for it. They have a ſhort Feaſt, but a long Reckoning: for a drop of mirth, they muſt drink a Sea of wrath: and *Who knows the power of that wrath?* It was a ſaying of *Cardinal Bellarmine*, If a man had but a ſight of Hell, it were enough to make an intemperate perſon ſober. Hell is the emphaſis of *Torment*. The Sacrifice of *Jealouſy* was to have *no Oyl*, nor *Frankincenſe* put to it, *Numb.* 5. 15. In

Hell is no *Oyl of Mercy* put to the Torments of the wicked to lenify them; nor is there any *Incenſe* of Prayer to appeaſe Gods wrath. Oh that ſinners would in time break off their iniquities. What is become of their Intellectuals, have they ſinned away *Reaſon* as well as *Conſcience*? The time of life is ſhort, but the torments of Hell are lengthened out; *Rev.* 14.11, *The ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever.*

4 *Uſe.* Here is a *light ſide* of the Text, to the Godly; they may be glad that their time here is *ſhort*; they cannot live but by dying. Behold, *honey at the end of the rod.*

1. The time being ſhort, their *ſinning-time* cannot be long. Sin is a troubleſome *inmate.* Rom. 7. 24, *Paul* that *Bird of Paradiſe*, ſighed and groan'd under corruption; a child of God mingles ſin with his duties, he cannot write a copy of holineſs without blotting; there's a party in a regenerate heart ſides with Satan; but be of good comfort, *the time is ſhort*, it is

is but a while (Chriſtians) that the *dead man ſhall be tyed to the living*; that you ſhall be combating with a proud, unbelieving heart. The year of *releaſe* is coming: Death doth to the Godly, as the Angel did to *Peter**, it ſmites them, and makes their chains of ſin fall off quite.

* Act. 12. 7.

2. The time being ſhort, their *working-time* cannot be long: in this life much work is cut out. There is, 1. The work of the *hand*, as the Artificer works in his Trade, *Prov.* 10. 4. 2. The work of the *head*; notions are the children of the brain, and there is labour in bringing them forth. 3. The work of the *heart*, which is the hardeſt work, to *ſearch*, *cleanſe*, *watch* the heart; as a clock ſometimes goes faſter, ſometimes ſlower; ſo the heart ſometimes goes faſter in ſin, ſometimes ſlower in duty. But here is the Saints comfort, their working-time is but ſhort, *Rev.* 19. 13, *They reſt from their labours.* When their bodies return to duſt, their ſouls return to reſt.

3. Time

3. Time being ſhort, their *ſuffering-time* cannot be long. Life is inter-larded with trouble, *Job* 14. 1. You may as well ſeparate *weight* from lead, as trouble from mans life. We come into the world with a *Cry*, and go out with a *Groan*. Every one hath his yoke, and 'tis well if there be not a nail in it; but *Time is ſhort*. Though the Croſs be *heavy*, we have but a little way to carry it; death will give the godly a *writ of eaſe*, Job 3. 17, *There* (*i.e.* in the Grave) *the wicked ceaſe from troubling*.

Quid eſt diu vivere, niſi diu Torqueri? Aug.

4. The *Time being ſhort*, their waiting-time cannot be long; the Godly ſhall not be long out of Heaven. While the bleſſed Angels ſee the orient beauties that ſhine in Gods face, Believers live far from Court, being impriſoned in the body. Here they do rather *deſire* God than *enjoy* him. But the *Time is ſhort*, it is but a few days, perhaps hours, and the Saints ſhall be ever ſolacing themſelves in the light of Gods Countenance. They ſhall leave their pillow of thorns, and lay their head

on

on Chriſts boſom. Faith gives a *propriety* in God, death gives a *poſſeſſion*. The Wagons and Chariots came ratling to old *Jacob*, but they were to carry him to his Son *Joſeph*. Deaths Chariot-wheels may come ratling to a Believer, but it is to carry him home to his Fathers houſe.

In that Paradiſe of God a Chriſtian ſhall have more than he can *think*; *Eph.* 3. 20. He can think, What if every mountain were a Pearl, every flower a Ruby, every ſand in the Sea a Diamond, the whole Globe a ſhining Chryſolite? but all his thoughts are too low and dwarfiſh to reach the glory of the Cœleſtial Pyramides. The reward Heavenly (as St. *Auſtin* ſaith) exceeds Faith; and the Time being ſhort, a Chriſtian ſhall be in Heaven before he is aware; then ſhall he bathe his Soul in thoſe perfum'd pleaſures of Paradiſe, which *run at Gods right hand for evermore.*

Præmium quod fide non attingetur.

I have done with the Text: let me ſpeak next to the Occaſion.

We

We are met to commemorate the Death of an Eminent Miniſter in this City, Mr: *JOHN WELLS.* Sorry I am to be an Actor in this Mournful Scene. But being requeſted by Him in his life (in caſe I ſurvived), I was willing to do this laſt Office of love. There hath been of late a great mortality of Miniſters. The men of the World need not be ſo fierce againſt Gods Miniſters, they will not trouble them long; Gods taking away his Miniſters ſo faſt (two in a day) boads much evil. It preſageth the fall of an Houſe when the Pillars are removed.

Concerning this Reverend Brother deceaſed, it is not my purpoſe to uſe any hyperbolical Encomiums, or Panegyricks; only give me leave to ſtrow a few Flowers upon his Hearſe.

This our worthy Friend was endued with Learning and volubleneſs of ſpeech. He could Ὀρθοτομεῖν τὸν λόγον, *divide the word rightly, as a workman that need not be aſhamed.* Seals he had to his Miniſtry. Some

Some of his hearers might call him (as *Cyprian* did *Cæcilius*) *novæ vitæ parentem* their Spiritual Father.

For his Piety, he was not only a *Follower* of that which was good, but a *leader*; he ſaid not long before his death, That he had brought this to an iſſue, *That he loved God.* He was fixed to his Principles: Though he be now by Death a *Fallen-Star*, yet he was not a *Wandring-Star*

His diſpoſition was not Moroſe, but Affable: a man of that Candor and Curteſy, as did oblige and win the affections of many to him. When Grace and ſweetneſs of Nature meet, it is like a Pearl in a Gold-Ring.

For his Preaching, 1. He did frame himſelf, *ad captum populi*; he Preached intelligibly to the capacity of his Auditory. Sure that Miniſter will never hit the hearts of his hearers, who ſhoots over their heads. Miniſters ſhould be *Stars* to give light, not *Clouds* to darken the Truth. Clearneſs is the grace of Speech. *Gregory Nazianzen* Preached plain to the ig-

norant, yet was admired by the learned.

2. He was elaborate and painful in his work. Sloath in a Miniſter is as bad as Sleep in a Sentinel. He would not offer that to God which *coſt him nothing*. Chriſt bled for Souls, well may we ſweat. This good man, like a Taper, waſted himſelf, while he gave light to others.

He was a man of a forgiving-Spirit; he was not troubled with the overflowing of the Gall: Kindneſſes he wrote in Marble; Injuries he forgot.

He was very Charitable: The Backs and Bellies of the Poor, were the furrows where he ſowed the Seeds of his liberality. But though his Charity did ſhine, he did not care it ſhould blaze. He is now *taken from the evil to come*.

For you that did ſit under his Miniſtry, let me tell You, you have loſt a *Friend* and a *Guide*; you have cauſe to be *Cloſe-mourners*. Let me requeſt only this

this of you, That you would remember the many good Inſtructions given you: though he is dead, let not his Sermons dye too, but labour to Copy them out fair in your Lives.

FINIS.